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Press Release

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For Immediate Release:

City Announces Funding Opportunity for Energy Efficiency in Historic Lowell

Lowell, MA - The City of Lowell is proud to announce an exciting opportunity for businesses, building owners, and residents of Lowell's Downtown Historic District (DLHD) to seek up to \$500,000 in combined grant and loan incentives for energy efficiency improvements to their buildings. Energy efficiency retrofits will improve building comfort, save energy, and reduce energy costs for building owners and business; the City also expects broader community benefits by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating jobs. The City will soon be implementing additional incentive programs for energy efficiency retrofits for homeowners throughout the city, and is using other federal funds to retrofit schools and municipal buildings.

Lowell was awarded \$5 million through a federal Recovery Act BetterBuildings grant (formerly called Retrofit Ramp-Up), targeting energy efficiency retrofit projects that achieve results, can be replicated, solve particular technical or strategic hurdles, and create or maintain jobs. One of thirty-five grants awarded nationwide, Lowell's grant targets energy efficiency retrofits compatible with historic preservation. As City Manager Bernie Lynch noted, "The City of Lowell is well-positioned to again be a national model for integrating historic preservation with the next chapter in economic development. This project will put numerous people back to work, reduce the utility costs associated with our downtown real estate, help protect the environment, and reinforce Lowell's emerging image as a progressive community on the rise. We look forward to helping Downtown building and business owners with this program."

The grant will be leveraged through a partnership with National Grid and the Lowell Development and Financial Corporation (LDFC). Several local banks will be participating in the loan program. Project proponents will be required to take full advantage of National Grid's audits and retrofit incentives prior to applying for grants and loans from the BetterBuildings program. LDFC will administer low-interest loans for energy efficiency retrofits in the Downtown Historic District, while the City's Project Manager, Amy Janovsky, will oversee the grant process. Since joining the City's staff in early July, Janovsky has been working to finalize the project framework, financing structure, and grant award criteria. Interested parties are asked to submit a Letter of Interest before September 30, 2010 using the form available on the City's website and at the City Clerk's office. The DLHD encompasses much of Lowell's downtown area including the commercial district, millyards, and canal system. The Lowell Historic Board's interactive website makes it easy to check a specific address to see if it is within the Historic District (<http://www.lowellma.gov/depts/historic-board/review-districts-permitting/Street%20Listings%20-%20All%20Districts.pdf/view>). Details for the complete Grant Application will be announced in late September.

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